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A Writer of History Sometimes Gets a Chance to Create It

By JOSEPH WERSHBA

A FAVORITE JOKE in Washington these days is that by the time Sen. Kennedy finishes raiding Harvard the only thing Harvard will have left is Radcliffe.

A strong case in point is McGeorge Bundy, 41-year-old Harvard dean of the faculty of arts and sciences, whom Sen. Kennedy has named as his special assistant for national security affairs. Bundy is expected to play an important role in the \$20,000-a-year post in drafting long-range political and military plans for the National Security Council, a top policy group headed by the President.

Although Bundy is a Republican and relatively unknown in Washington, Kennedy reposes considerable confidence in him. Bundy's disenchantment with President Eisenhower's conduct of foreign policy brought him over to Sen. Kennedy's side in the recent election. Bundy's university colleagues regard him as a keen, penetrating, able administrator and a defender of academic freedom against McCarthyism.

At one stage in the Cabinet-picking game, Bundy was mentioned prominently as a possible Under Secretary of State.

Closeup



McGeorge Bundy

New Kennedy Aide

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Stimson and Acheson both provide a clue to Bundy's own idea on how to deal with the Soviet Union—from Stimson's early hopes that an agreement with Russia would be the surest step toward peace, to Acheson's cold war stand that the Russians could be dealt with only from "positions of strength." Bundy inclines toward negotiation—but is aware of the pitfalls.

One of the strongest influences on Bundy's foreign policy outlook was the late Henry L. Stimson, FDR's Secretary of War during World War II. When Bundy was just 28 years old, he co-authored a biography of Stimson. (Bundy's father had served as Stimson's Asst. Secretary of War from 1941 to 1945, and had also been Asst. Secretary of State under Stimson in the Hoover Administration, from 1931 to 1933.)

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It was Stimson who had urged as early as September, 1945, that the U.S. invite the Soviet Union into a direct agreement on control of the atom bomb. The Stimson Plan never had a chance to go into effect. But despite the cold war that followed, Stimson still hoped that the Russians eventually would realize that their own best interests lay in a friendly, trustworthy agreement with the Americans.

Another significant influence on Bundy's thinking has been Dean Acheson. Bundy edited Acheson's papers into book form in 1951 and declared: "Mr. Acheson will be listed 50 years from now as one of our best Secretaries of State. I think on almost every big issue he has been at once right, energetic and skillful."

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Although McGeorge Bundy comes from a well-to-do, Republican, scholarly and public-service family tradition, he enjoys a back-alley political argument now and then. In 1951, when William F. Buckley Jr. published his attack on Yale University for "collectivism" and "atheism," Bundy—a Yale grad—tore into Buckley in the Atlantic Monthly as "a violent, unbalanced, twisted and ignorant young man."

Buckley promptly labeled Bundy a "haughty totalitarian" who could rightly be called "fascist" or at least a "minor court hatchet-man." And the Saturday Evening Post editorially complained that Bundy had "sawed Buckley in two" and was thus guilty of "McGeorge Bundyism." The SEP also taunted Bundy by asking: "Are any liberals really terrified of Joe McCarthy?"

It proved to be more than just a rhetorical question. Bundy was soon embattled with McCarthy on a number of fronts. His brother Bill, a Central Intelligence Agency employee, got the full red-bucket treatment from McCarthy, who also went after Bundy's employer, Harvard.

Bundy fought McCarthy—and also fought excesses in the government's security program.

"The national security is not served when the security program becomes an instrument of insecurity and mistrust among men of good sense and high character," he told a Senate committee in 1955, adding: "It is high time for us to recover from a timidity which has led us to give a worldwide impression that we do not trust ourselves."

McGeorge Bundy was born in Boston, March 30, 1919, went to Yale, where he was active in undergraduate journalism and politics, and was graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1940. He served in the Infantry, 1942 to 1945, and reached the rank of captain.

After the war, Bundy spent a year and a half in daily talks with Stimson before writing "On Active Service."

Later, Bundy became a political analyst with the Council on Foreign Relations and then turned to teaching government at Harvard. In 1953, he became a dean.

Bundy was married in 1950 and has four young sons. He is a solidly-built six-footer and an excellent tennis player. In recent years, he has been talking of doing a book about Woodrow Wilson. It now appears, however, that he is more likely to be making history in the next few years than writing about it.